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Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 28 Nov 2007 23:25:14 GMT

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Jean H writes:

> I haven't  
> found anything about new functions, bug fixes etc... so is v7.0  
> "simply" a new interface, or is there actually some new things under the  
> hood???

Oh, ye of little faith! Of course there are new things.  
Let me see if I can find my list around here somewhere...

Humm. I'm SURE there was a list...somewhere. :-(

Cheers,

David

Note to Ken Bowman: I heard that 24-bit PostScript  
support is VERY high on the \*next\* list.

--

David Fanning, Ph.D.

Fanning Software Consulting, Inc.

Coyote's Guide to IDL Programming: <http://www.dfanning.com/>

Sepore ma de ni thui. ("Perhaps thou speakest truth.")

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Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Wed, 28 Nov 2007 23:43:24 GMT

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David Fanning writes:

> Humm. I'm SURE there was a list...somewhere. :-(

Ah, here it is. From the ITTVIS What's New in IDL  
web page:

IDL - The Workbench

IDL - The Power of Eclipse

IDL - The Ability to Grow [Grow what!?!]

IDL - The Future is Bright

Can't ask for much more than that for 500 clams a year!

Cheers,

David

P.S. A guy could probably get a little discouraged about how his money is being spent, but...goodness...that future looks SO bright! Has anyone checked lately to see how MatLab's FutureRama Meter is looking?

--

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Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [Jean H.](#) on Wed, 28 Nov 2007 23:56:48 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

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David Fanning wrote:

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>

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> how his money is being spent, but...goodness...that future

> looks SO bright! Has anyone checked lately to see how

> MatLab's FutureRama Meter is looking?

>

:-/

thanks for the enlightening info! ... and confirming my thoughts...

Jean

---

---

Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [Michael Galloy](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 00:10:06 GMT

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On Nov 28, 4:01 pm, Jean H <jghas...@DELTHIS.ucalgary.ANDTHIS.ca> wrote:

> Hi all,

>

> Moving to v7.0 is not the thing to do today (just finishing a project +  
> any update = lot of problems that will make you weeks late). However I  
> have read the little information that is available... but I haven't  
> found anything about new functions, bug fixes etc... so is v7.0  
> "simply" a new interface, or is there actually some new things under the  
> hood???

>

> Jean

It's definitely sparse in non-Workbench stuff. (Of course, IDL 6.4 came out at the end of May this year.) Not sure about bug fixes, but for new routines, from the "What's New":

The following new functions and procedures were added to IDL in this release.

#### GET\_LOGIN\_INFO

Returns the name of the computer running the IDL process, as well as the user's login name.

#### MAKE\_RT

Creates a stand-alone IDL runtime distribution for one or more platforms.

#### ROUTINE\_FILEPATH

Returns the full path to a currently-compiled procedure or function (or a list of procedures and functions).

Mike

--

[www.michaelgalloy.com](http://www.michaelgalloy.com)

---

---

Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?  
Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 13:05:08 GMT  
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David,

I think you are being a little harsh here. Would you rather have spent the 500 bucks on yet another image processing tool, filter, etc. that you will never use? This DE thing was way over due, especially on Linux/Mac, where the old DE was completely unworkable. I believe ITTVIS did the right thing with this move. This step back to clean up an old mess was absolutely necessary. I can definitely hear myself swearing less since eclipse came into my life. :-)

Haje

"David Fanning" <[news@dfanning.com](mailto:news@dfanning.com)> wrote in message  
[news:MPG.21b7ab0961d5e58198a105@news.frii.com...](mailto:news:MPG.21b7ab0961d5e58198a105@news.frii.com...)

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>

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Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Haje Korth writes:

> I think you are being a little harsh here. Would you rather have spent the  
> 500 bucks on yet another image processing tool, filter, etc. that you will  
> never use?

Well, no. But I do have a (growing!) list of tools, filters, etc. that I *would* use if someone were kind enough to build them for me. I think I started this list back in the days of IDL 6.1, if I remember correctly. I'm still waiting to cross something off it.

> This DE thing was way over due, especially on Linux/Mac, where  
> the old DE was completely unworkable.

No argument from me here. This will be a revelation to legions of UNIX IDL programmes who find EMACS, uh, difficult. I'm among them, and I can't even begin to tell you how wonderful it is to have something like this on those machines.

I'm just saying, that unless ITTVIS is talking about "growing" a cash crop (I find their web page confusing on this issue), I'm not sure my next year of IDL programming will look too much different from my last year. I'm not a gadget sort of guy. A browser and a newsreader are about all I need to keep me happy and I'm pretty happy with what I use now.

At the moment, I find the Eclipse thing confusing and getting in the way of doing my work. I expect this to improve as suggestions from younger users pour in here. Meanwhile the iPod my youngest son insisted I HAD to have, sits over there on the corner of my desk, unused. I can't even remember how to access the menu. Strange things happen when I move my fingers across it. Magic! :-)

> I believe ITTVIS did the right thing  
> with this move. This step back to clean up an old mess was absolutely  
> necessary. I can definitely hear myself swearing less since eclipse came  
> into my life. :-)

Cleaning up noise pollution is a worthy goal. And I applaud them for that. But certainly one of the jobs of a software company is to fix and improve software. I'd like to see some of that, too.

Cheers,

David

--

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Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 14:13:19 GMT

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David Fanning writes:

> Cleaning up noise pollution is a worthy goal. And I applaud  
> them for that. But certainly one of the jobs of a software  
> company is to fix and improve software. I'd like to see some  
> of that, too.

In fairness, I will admit there have been improvements  
in IDL since 6.1. At least there have been if you  
make your definition of "improvement" broad enough to  
encompass iTools. But, with one or two exceptions  
(which, I am sorry, I can't think of at the moment), the  
improvements have benefited someone other than me.

Oh!! I use the mouse-wheel capability on draw widgets!

I'm grateful for that, and I'll go cross it off my  
list right now.

Cheers,

David

--

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---

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Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 14:27:03 GMT

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David Fanning writes:

> Oh!! I use the mouse-wheel capability on draw widgets!

And the FILE\_\* routines. I \*love\* those and use them all the time. :-)

OK, I'm ready to concede. There \*have\* been improvements in IDL in the past five years. But, couldn't we PLEASE do something about PostScript. :-(

Cheers,

David

--

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---

---

Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [Kenneth Bowman](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 14:39:02 GMT

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---

In article <MPG.21b7a6c03145300d98a104@news.frii.com>,  
David Fanning <news@dfanning.com> wrote:

>  
> Note to Ken Bowman: I heard that 24-bit PostScript  
> support is VERY high on the \*next\* list.

I swoon at the thought!

Ken

---

---

Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 15:29:02 GMT

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Haje Korth writes:

> I think you are being a little harsh here.

You know what's strange to me? When I try to be a little bit controversial and start a topic I

think will result in interesting and entertaining conversation, and the airwaves go silent, and I find myself arguing my with previous posts. I keep thinking to myself, "Maybe I should have just had that last beer for breakfast." :-)

Cheers,

David

--

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---

Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [Haje Korth](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 16:02:42 GMT

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David,

you did not shut me up I am just terribly busy. I felt guilty provoking you to write long sermons about your relationship with IDL. I am going to postpone consumption of your news posts until lunch time. :-)

Cheers,

Haje

"David Fanning" <[news@dfanning.com](mailto:news@dfanning.com)> wrote in message [news:MPG.21b888aabc112b1c98a10b@news.frii.com...](mailto:news:MPG.21b888aabc112b1c98a10b@news.frii.com...)

> Haje Korth writes:

>

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>

> You know what's strange to me? When I try to be

> a little bit controversial and start a topic I

> think will result in interesting and entertaining

> conversation, and the airwaves go silent, and I

> find myself arguing my with previous posts. I keep

> thinking to myself, "Maybe I should have just had

> that last beer for breakfast." :-)

>

> Cheers,

>

> David

>



> --  
> David Fanning, Ph.D.  
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Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?  
Posted by [Paul Van Delst\[1\]](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 16:45:23 GMT  
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David Fanning wrote:

> Haje Korth writes:  
>  
> At the moment, I find the Eclipse thing confusing and  
> getting in the way of doing my work.

I had the same experience with the Eclipse plugin for Fortran95 (photran). I found eclipse non-intuitive to use. And slow (but that was over a year ago now).

I guess I'm more of an old fart than I thought. I never experienced a serendipitous moment with eclipse, just frustration since it wasn't giving me any new functionality

(FWIW, the whole "integrated with subversion/cvs" as one reason for using eclipse is lost on me. Hasn't everyone been using version control software for the last decade or so already?)

> I expect this to  
> improve as suggestions from younger users pour in here.  
> Meanwhile the iPod my youngest son insisted I HAD to have,  
> sits over there on the corner of my desk, unused. I can't  
> even remember how to access the menu. Strange things  
> happen when I move my fingers across it. Magic! :-(

I explicitly asked my wife \*not\* to buy me an iPod for birthday/chrisie/whatever. Just what I need - something else that would encourage muggers on the Metro.

It's official: I'm a curmudgeonly old fart. :o)

>> I believe ITTVIS did the right thing  
>> with this move. This step back to clean up an old mess was absolutely  
>> necessary. I can definitely hear myself swearing less since eclipse came  
>> into my life. :-)  
>  
> Cleaning up noise pollution is a worthy goal. And I applaud  
> them for that. But certainly one of the jobs of a software  
> company is to fix and improve software. I'd like to see some  
> of that, too.

+1.

An official version of a \*simple\* plotting tool with rubber band box-zoom capability (ala your ZPLOT, or my WPLOT) would still be a nice addition. It wouldn't be difficult to do and sometimes a regular ol' hammer is the right tool for the job - not a pneumatic nailer complete with its own air compressor.

BTW, are there any licensing issues I should be aware of if I commit the entire Coyote library into our subversion system here? People check out my IDL scripts and a bunch of my code falls in a heap coz the scripts use various and sundry Coyote IDL programs that are in my local path, but not in other people's.

cheers,

paulv

---

Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [R.G.Stockwell](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 17:11:47 GMT

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"David Fanning" <[news@dfanning.com](mailto:news@dfanning.com)> wrote in message [news:MPG.21b8718d13c8aa2c98a107@news.frii.com](mailto:news:MPG.21b8718d13c8aa2c98a107@news.frii.com)...

> Well, no. But I do have a (growing!) list of tools, filters,  
> etc. that I \*would\* use if someone where kind enough to  
> build them for me.

...

>> This DE thing was way over due, especially on Linux/Mac, where  
>> the old DE was completely unworkable.

>

> No argument from me here.

...

> I'm just saying, that unless ITTVIS is talking about  
> "growing" a cash crop (I find their web page confusing  
> on this issue), I'm not sure my next year of IDL  
> programming will look too much different from my last  
> year.

..

> Cleaning up noise pollution is a worthy goal. And I applaud  
> them for that. But certainly one of the jobs of a software  
> company is to fix and improve software. I'd like to see some  
> of that, too.

my two cents, I feel exactly the way David does.

I have not used itools at all. I have not employed  
object graphics - since for my mode of analyzing data

in a reproducible way prohibits random GUI exploration (other than as a first look) and creating publishable figures and animations for presentations - there is apparently no need for object graphics (perhaps my plots are too simple).

I also do not do GUI programming in IDL. I have done a great deal of GUI programming in Labview (and if one is used to t-bone steaks, going back to gruel is unpleasant).

There are a number of new functions added that are useful, so it is something that keeps me in maintainance.

When I read the all-new workspace/projects stuff, where I can conveniently take my entire path and make it a workspace, I made a load groan. Like Mark Hadfield mentioned, i think i will ignore the new projects and workspaces and hope they go away.

And I do find it unbelievable that IDL did not have a DE under \*nix for all these years. Absolutely unbelievable. I very very much look forward to the arrival of the eclipse environment.

Cheers,  
bob

PS having ranted a bit there, I'd still say that IDL is a fantastic tool for data analysis, and the ease of programming (and especially debugging/ stepping through code and processing/graphing data that is in mid-stream) is a major plus. It takes me seconds to bracket a problem and figure it out in IDL. With my lousy fortran skills and the lack of a good fortran DE - it takes me days to do the same thing in fortran.

---

Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?  
Posted by [David Fanning](#) on Thu, 29 Nov 2007 17:19:32 GMT  
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Paul van Delst writes:

> BTW, are there any licensing issues I should be aware of if I commit the entire Coyote  
> library into our subversion system here? People check out my IDL scripts and a bunch of my  
> code falls in a heap coz the scripts use various and sundry Coyote IDL programs that are  
> in my local path, but not in other people's.

Na, just thown 'em in there. My lawyer sorts through the PayPal receipts and will be in touch if necessary. :-)

Cheers,

David

--

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---

Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [proffmw@gmail.com](mailto:proffmw@gmail.com) on Fri, 30 Nov 2007 09:30:24 GMT

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On Nov 29, 9:39 am, Kenneth Bowman <k-bow...@tamu.edu> wrote:

> In article <MPG.21b7a6c03145300d98a...@news.frii.com>,

> David Fanning <n...@dfanning.com> wrote:

>

>

>

>> Note to Ken Bowman: I heard that 24-bit PostScript

>> support is VERY high on the \*next\* list.

>

> I swoon at the thought!

>

> Ken

So IDL 7.0 is out.

I have to admit that I don't look forward to new versions of IDL anymore.

Version 2 made major strides; versions 3 did so too. Versions 4 and 5 added a few nice procedures/functions. I'm not sure that there's anything new in version 6 that I actually use.

But then again, I suppose I'm a bit of a dinosaur. I started using IDL in 1981

(before versions???, but after SOL, when IDL ran on microVaxes). The only revolutionary things I've found at all useful are structures and pointers.

I've never used object graphics. I've written one widget, and decided it wasn't worth the effort. Widgets aren't any good when you're constantly tinkering with the code - and my code (anything longer than about 10 lines) is never finished. I dislike IDLDE (I use Windows only under protest).

The IDL astronomy users library and the MPFIT routines are extremely useful, but of course they come from users, and not ITT.

I'm a working scientist. I program what I need when I need it. I have lots of procedures that IDL got around to supplying after I'd written them (it's a pain when IDL decides to usurp one of my old routine names).

The machines I have scattered around the lab run versions 5.6 through 6.3.

Upgrading them means taking a major fraction of a day off to do it (including debugging all the paths). I upgrade when I get a new machine. So why do I keep maintenance? It's cheap (on an academic price plan), and lets me upgrade my workstations and laptops!

From a cold mountaintop, on a cold night,  
Cheers,  
Fred

---

Subject: Re: IDL 7.0 .... any new functions?

Posted by [MarioIncandenza](#) on Sat, 01 Dec 2007 18:39:57 GMT

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Fred,

I sympathize with your ennui. The key here is that scientific programmers, such as yourself and roughly 3/4 of this list, are not enough of a revenue source to drive development of IDL. Development is driven by application developers, who (I can only assume) pay more for their licenses than we do :)

But as long as IDL doesn't \*lose\* functionality, I'll (tell my boss to) keep paying the tab. And that's not an idly posed hypothetical, either. Consider the case of ESRI. When ESRI decided application developers were more important than researchers, they:

- obsoleted a working macro language;
- forced all scripting into an object-oriented framework with 100s of lines of overhead for simple tasks;
- walked away from Unix systems entirely (!)

Result: Many things I used to do in Arc, I now do-- in IDL. Which is not always well-suited to the task.

Underneath the mountain, with pick and shovel,

--Edward H.

---